

Interview #1, Assistant Principal

1. What is your definition of leadership?
 - **Leading other people to believe that an idea was their idea, getting buy-in.**
 - Leadership is the ability to get people to agree with the big idea. It is a person or system that gets people to work together effectively. It is telling other people what to do.
2. What are the positive aspects of being in a leadership position?
 - **Running the day-to-day operations.**
 - Being able to be your own boss. Using everything you've learned over the years to impact the organization. The authority to create change.
3. What are the negative or difficult aspects of being in a leadership position?
 - **Putting friendships aside is sometimes necessary. Friction.**
 - Being in a leadership position often takes away time from your family. It requires longer hours. The relationship between your colleagues does change.
4. What do you believe are the attributes of a good principal?
 - **No decisions by himself. He collaborates, is a good listener, and is sympathetic.**
 - A good principal is a good listener, and researcher. He can find answers to questions and often looks for best practices. He shares information with his staff and supports ongoing professional development.
5. What ethical standards do you hold dear?
 - **Fair. Firm. Consistent. Respect.**
 - These are the same ethical standards that are important in the classroom. But I think a leader should have somewhat of a different view. I am not sure what that is.
6. What is your vision for the school and do you think it is shared by all?
 - **The one I remember from my elementary school "All children can and will learn in a suitable environment.**
 - I should have rephrased the question. I am assuming this is his vision for our school. It is shared by all.
7. When and how do you use collaborative decision making? Is it worth the time and effort?
 - **All the time. I like when teachers come to me with problems or solutions. Yes, it's worth it. You never know what someone has to say.**
 - Collaborative decision making can be used when implementing a new discipline plan for the campus, but often teachers are not asked to collaborate. As a leader I would assume that the principals collaborate. Some collaboration is sometimes necessary, but not always.
8. What differing ways do you use to communicate (give & receive) with faculty and students? What are the biggest communication problems?
 - **I like to be face-to-face, so that the person can see my expression and my tone. I had a teacher tell me once that I was yelling in an email because I used an exclamation mark. And the phone so the person can hear my tone and I can hear theirs.**
 - There is no way around not using emails because as a busy leader you often don't have time to make personal visits face-to-face. As a teacher I don't like being interrupted in the middle of my class by a phone call. I do like to be informed whatever the communication may be.

9. How do you effectively get groups to work together to reach the goals of the organization?

- Faculty Meetings or staff development. Usually teachers seat with the people in their halls. Group by weak and strong strengths.
- Faculty meetings are good time to talk about data or a goal as a group. Staff development days are usually work days, but can also be used to briefly get motivation from the group. In every organization there are people who are leaders and getting their support means something to everyone else.

10. What strategies do you use to motivate your staff?

- I like to show appreciation out of my own pocket. Donuts, Nachos, Frito Pies.
- Motivating your staff is important. Motivating adults to have a positive attitude while at work can have a positive effect on the goals of the job. Food should not be the only way to motivate because you are probably missing the people who pass on the food.

11. What methods have you found effective for resolving conflicts?

- Clarification. Usually it's just misunderstanding. Talk.
- The number one resolution for conflict is talking. It is important to allow all parties to clearly communicate their version of the incident that occurred. It is equally important to come to an understanding that all parties can live with.

12. How would you describe your leadership style? When do you need to alter your style?

- Let people do their job. If I need to step in I want to know what you need from me.
- I think a leader should allow people to do their jobs. There are lots of times as leader you will be asked for your help or assistance. There needs to be an ability to adapt.

13. Should principals have more power and central office less? And should teachers be more empowered? If so, why?

- Yes. Like the air conditioning system. We should be able to control that from the school. We have people on the school board that make decisions and have no experience with the schools. Teachers have enough power already. They need someone else to handle some discipline problems so that they don't create a bad relationship between student and teacher.
- No. There needs to be checks and balances. The temperature should be set and not altered. Teacher can request a student be moved to another class, but must provide some proof as to why. A lot of times teachers must explain themselves empowerment could have mixed consequences.

14. What are the positive aspects of the current campus culture and climate? What aspects are you trying to improve?

- Family atmosphere. Fun incentives and more faculty meetings after-school like monthly. Teachers would know when the meetings are scheduled and no excuses for not being there.
- A calm family atmosphere encourages creativity and positive thinking. I don't think meeting monthly after-school for a faculty meeting is necessary for the staff. This would not even be necessary for teacher leaders because they have an extra conference period during the day for reasons like these.

15. What major changes to public education would you recommend? Why do you believe change is so difficult in schools?

- Corporal Punishment. Lawsuits and the legality. For example a parent consents to pops but when the student gets home and sees his bottom red and shows the parent the same parent that consented now files a lawsuit.
 - The idea of corporal punishment being used again in public education is a major change that's not going to happen. A major change in public education that I would recommend is some form of mandatory parent involvement. I would agree that lawsuits and laws both federal and state are the reasons change is difficult.
16. What aspects of the school (people, programs, etc.) are regularly evaluated? What are the advantages and pitfalls of evaluation?
- Instruction (Test Scores), Attendance, Discipline. They are not always a true depiction or consistent. For example students benchmark scores from a test they took right before Christmas break.
 - Test scores are always evaluated to meet goals for state requirements. I have found that just because a student does not pass benchmark does not mean they will not pass the state assessment. Discipline should be evaluated to create an intervention plan.
17. What books, training, or professional organizations would you recommend for my further professional development in leadership?
- ASCD, Black Educators Association, and the National Middle School Association
 - A principal, women's, and ethnic group association are groups that I had not considered before. I am not going to join them all, but I will look into them to see what resources they have to offer. I have been to the National Middle School Association Conference once and I think that have some great resources to offer.
18. What additional experience, learning, or advice can you share for my developing an effective internship?
- Come down here. Free us up.
 - I don't think coming to the principals offices to help will guarantee me the job, but the experience could be invaluable. I appreciate the offer and opportunity to learn. Mr. Eckford is basically telling me to get involved and that his door is always open.

Interview #2, Assistant Principal

1. What is your definition of leadership?
 - Being in position to lead other people toward a common goal.
 - Leadership is the ability to get people to agree with the big idea. It is a person or system that gets people to work together effectively. It is telling other people what to do.
2. What are the positive aspects of being in a leadership position?
 - Directly influence, fulfilling, and empowering
 - Being able to be your own boss. Using everything you've learned over the years to impact the organization. The authority to create change
3. What are the negative or difficult aspects of being in a leadership position?
 - Making different decisions. Motivating everybody (team).
 - Being in a leadership position often takes away time from your family. It requires longer hours. The relationship between your colleagues does change.
4. What do you believe are the attributes of a good principal?

- Motivator getting people onboard. Listener not overly-authoritative, works hard
 - A good principal is a good listener, and researcher. He can find answers to questions and often looks for best practices. He shares information with his staff and supports ongoing professional development.
5. What ethical standards do you hold dear?
- Fairness, honesty, keeping the main thing the main thing.
 - These are the same ethical standards that are important in the classroom. But I think a leader should have somewhat of a different view. I am not sure what that is.
6. What is your vision for the school and do you think it is shared by all?
- Hard work. Public service, going above and beyond.
 - I should have rephrased the question. I am assuming this is his vision for our school. It is shared by all.
7. When and how do you use collaborative decision making? Is it worth the time and effort?
- We always collaborate. Talk. Open communication. Suggested that I study Case studies.
 - Collaborative decision making can be used when implementing a new discipline plan for the campus, but often teachers are not asked to collaborate. As a leader I would assume that the principals collaborate. Some collaboration is sometimes necessary, but not always.
8. What differing ways do you use to communicate (give & receive) with faculty and students? What are the biggest communication problems?
- Email, one on one, cafeteria, gym, PA system, phone calls. Sometimes people don't check their emails.
 - There is no way around not using emails because as a busy leader you often don't have time to make personal visits face-to-face. As a teacher I don't like being interrupted in the middle of my class by a phone call. I do like to be informed whatever the communication may be.
9. How do you effectively get groups to work together to reach the goals of the organization?
- Get people and departments to see the big picture, buy-in
 - Faculty meetings are good time to talk about data or a goal as a group. Staff development days are usually work days, but can also be used to briefly get motivation from the group. In every organization there are people who are leaders and getting their support means something to everyone else.
10. What strategies do you use to motivate your staff?
- Food (Nachos), praise, rewards, fruits of labor. Were we rank to pump up confidence.
 - Motivating your staff is important. Motivating adults to have a positive attitude while at work can have a positive effect on the goals of the job. Food should not be the only way to motivate because you are probably missing the people who pass on the food.
11. What methods have you found effective for resolving conflicts?
- Student-student, teacher-student, teacher-teacher, teacher-administrator. Mediate. Various methods individual, try to come to a common ground and (save face) compromise.

- The number one resolution for conflict is talking. It is important to allow all parties to clearly communicate their version of the incident that occurred. It is equally important to come to an understanding that all parties can live with.
12. How would you describe your leadership style? When do you need to alter your style?
- Collaborative. I am very controlling when it comes to TAKS rules and regulations. Teachers the proof is in the pudding. Depends on the needs, listen, and get points of view.
 - I think a leader should allow people to do their jobs. There are lots of times as leader you will be asked for your help or assistance. There needs to be an ability to adapt.
13. Should principals have more power and central office less? And should teachers be more empowered? If so, why?
- In Louisiana schools were autonomous and ran themselves, but here central offices dictate a lot of what goes on at the campus level. It depends.
 - No. There needs to be checks and balances. The temperature should be set and not altered. Teacher can request a student be moved to another class, but must provide some proof as to why. A lot of times teachers must explain themselves empowerment could have mixed consequences.
14. What are the positive aspects of the current campus culture and climate? What aspects are you trying to improve?
- Teachers fell they are cared for. Positive. Improve safety, increase test scores, reduce failures, attendance, and teacher morale.
 - A calm family atmosphere encourages creativity and positive thinking. I don't think meeting monthly after-school for a faculty meeting is necessary for the staff. This would not even be necessary for teacher leaders because they have an extra conference period during the day for reasons like these.
15. What major changes to public education would you recommend? Why do you believe change is so difficult in schools?
- Teacher effectiveness should be measured more easily. And easier to let teachers go. People are afraid of change. Schools use to be a safe profession that you could stay in and retire. As a principal you may have to show improvement in 3 years or you're gone. The same should be done to teachers.
 - The only thing teachers are measured on is test scores. I don't think he would agree with teachers making recommendations for principal effectiveness. A major change in public education that I would recommend is some form of mandatory parent involvement. I would agree that change can be difficult, but when having a job is important people adapt.
16. What aspects of the school (people, programs, etc.) are regularly evaluated? What are the advantages and pitfalls of evaluation?
- Departments, teachers. You can compare math test scores between teachers and schools. Sometimes evaluation is difficult when there is nothing to compare it to like skills for living.
 - Test scores are always evaluated to meet goals for state requirements. I have found that just because a student does not pass benchmark does not mean they will not pass the state assessment. Discipline should be evaluated to create an intervention plan.
17. What books, training, or professional organizations would you recommend for my further professional development in leadership?

- Monday Morning Leadership by David Cottrell, What Great Principals Do Differently by Todd Whitaker, and Choosing Excellence by John Mellow. The author Todd Whitaker is coming to speak in the district next week.
 - The book recommendations were good reference material. I was not aware that principals have trainings or speakers come and talk to them for professional growth.
18. What additional experience, learning, or advice can you share for my developing an effective internship?
- Study case studies; volunteer to do stuff, work Saturday School for internship hours, the district has a Leadership Academy.
 - I don't think coming to the principals offices to help will guarantee me the job, but the experience could be invaluable. I appreciate the offer and opportunity to learn. Mr. Griffith is basically telling me to get involved and that his door is always open.